Food for Freedom Issue

The Southern PATRIOT

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War Effort Said Threatened By 'Hunger Gap'

Our war effort and that of our Allies is threatened by a *hunger gap* between food needs and food production at the very time when the toughest part of the struggle lies just ahead. Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Grover Hill put the situation bluntly when he told a Congressional Appropriations Committee that, "even though we could produce twice as much food as we will be able to produce, it will not be enough."

It was with great foresight that Secretary Wickard began his appeals for greater farm output back in April, 1941. Since then, there has been a long intensive campaign to get every farmer and every acre of land fully enlisted in the job of feeding the men who make our fighting weapons and those who use them. Judged by peace-time standards, great results have been achieved. But the burden of war demands has been so great that agriculture has steadily lost ground in its attempt to keep up.

The British do not have enough of any food product with the exception of bread. The Russians are fighting off the concentrated weight of the German armies with civilian rations less than half those gotten by the German population. Even in this country, Secretary Wickard warned early in March that our national diet will soon be approaching the war rations of the British.

How long a row we have yet to hoe is indicated by the fact that in 1942 the South's cotton acreage alone equaled three times its combined acreage of Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, dry beans, soy-

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'Hi, Buddy!'

—Reproduced by Permission of Philco Corporation.

War Demands Expanding Food Production in South

By the sweat of three million Southern farmers, straining to produce larger and larger amounts of war-vital foodstuffs, a sweeping expansion in food production is being chalked up in the cotton country. Cotton and tobacco, once almost the sole cash crops in a 14-State region embracing 866,000 square miles, have given ground before a giant increase in acreage devoted to production of peanuts, soybeans, sweet potatoes, milk and eggs and meat, vegetables and fruits, and pastures and feed crops for livestock.

In the South last year, farmers' gross income from food and feed production hit an all-time high of 3.2 billion dollars, well over twice the 1935-39 average for these crops. The volume of food production itself was 17 per cent higher than in 1935-39.

Long an importer of food and feed, as well as industrial products, the South in 1942 came closer to feeding its own people than ever in modern times, and also supplied great stores of food for the armed forces and for lend-lease. And underneath it all, millions of acres of land, now devoted to the gentle uses of food and feed production, are getting a rest from production of the old soil-wasting crops.

Along with increased food production and income, a series of other wartime changes have come. When war came, a large part of the estimated two million surplus that had been accumulated on

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FSA Farmers Led All Others In Increase of Vital War Crops

An Axis agent interested in appraising the effectiveness of our war effort would have found much cause for optimism and for amazement in the denial of all funds to the Farm Security Administration by the House Appropriations Committee just a few weeks ago, for—

In 1942 FSA families increased production of nine critical war crops far more, proportionately, than other farmers in the country.

By telling small farmers what crops were needed, why they were needed, and how to produce them, by offering them small loans to provide essential tools, stock and materials, the FSA last year enabled about nine per cent of the farmers in the South, who had hitherto produced well under three per cent of the region's marketable farm products, to account for:

- 61 per cent of the total increase in milk production for the South.
- 14 per cent of the total increase in egg production for the South.
- 22 per cent of the total increase in chicken production for the South.
- 7.5 per cent of the total increase in pork production for the South.
- 10 per cent of the total increase in beef production for the South.
- 10 per cent of the total increase in peanut production for the South.
- 7 per cent of the total increase in soybean production for the South.

The FSA embarked on its present task of gearing the small farms of the nation into the war effort immediately after Pearl Harbar. Working with these smallest farmers who were disadvantaged by uneconomically small units, relatively poorer soils, and by outmoded and inadequate equipment, the FSA achieved results in the very first year of these efforts which challenge our estimate of what this country's agricultural plant can produce.

Limited by financial restrictions, the FSA could admit but one out of three eligible farmers to the program. But these 460,000 farm families, only 7.6 per cent of all farmers in the United States, accounted for 38 per cent of the total increase in milk production, 17 per cent of the increase in dry beans, 11 per cent of the increase in beef, and 10 per cent of the increase in peanuts.

Consider how great might be our increase in food production if the remaining two-thirds of Southern small farmers could be similarly aided, or if the vast number of the small farmers in the rest of the country could be enlisted in our war effort with equal effectiveness. Yet instead of Congressional directives and appropriations directing such an expansion, we find the disturbing fact that Congress itself threatens to dissolve the entire program.

There can be but one explanation for this tragic anomaly—Congress has been misled by the attacks of supposed farm leaders concerned only with the further whittling away of family-size farms in order to augment the farm labor supply.

Who are the forces leading the fight to destroy the FSA?

Most powerful force in the fight to abolish the small farmer's friend, the Farm Security Administration, is the powerful American Farm Bureau Federation. With Ed O'Neal, wealthy Alabama plantation owner, as its president, the Farm Bureau represents today an unholy alliance of commercial farm, manufacturing interests and reactionary Congressmen.

The sharpest anti-FSA blow so far was delivered by the House Subcommittee on Appropriations, which usurped the power of the Committee on Agriculture to urge that FSA be dismembered, part of it to go to the Farm Credit Administration and the rest to the Extension Service.

Chairman Tarver had this to say on the floor of the House regarding his committee's proposals:

> **"I am frank to say that the Farm Bureau Federation, with regard to some of the more controversial items, has been all powerful in the consideration of the pending bill."**

The FSA, abolished by the House, can yet be restored by the Senate, and, indeed, indorsements by such men as Senators Bankhead of Alabama, LaFollette of Wisconsin and Chavez of New Mexico are encouraging. Certainly America's small farmers must make their voice heard to their Senators and let it be known that the Farm Bureau does not speak for them, for the life of FSA is at stake.

The Farm Bureau may win its war against the small farmer even if it loses this legislative battle. A cleverly concealed whispering campaign has begun in an effort to smear FSA leadership and so force the agency into reactionary hands where it can be used as a weapon against the small farmer.

So far the attack has been centered on C. B. Baldwin, able FSA Administrator, of whom Senator Lister Hill of Alabama said on the floor of the Congress last year:

> **"I have known Mr. Baldwin for 8 or 9 years. . . . Mr. Baldwin has within his heart the gospel of humanity. He has a great passion to help and to do something for disadvantaged and underprivileged and exploited men, women and children. If he has erred, his errors have been due, in my opinion, more to his zeal and to his devotion to human welfare, human rights, and human progress, than to any other thing. . . . If there is any one thing that America needs and has needed it is men of vision as her leaders in places of public trust in her Government. Mr. Baldwin is this type of public servant and leader."**

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Note to the 'Economy Bloc'

"The yearly cost of the FSA's service to 500,000 families is equal to one-half the cost of a single battleship, and its health work costs each year the price of just one flying fortress."

—Dr. D. F. Fleming, *From a radio address over WSM, Nashville.*

Despite Wealth of Resources, Southern Agriculture Fails To Contribute Fair Share to Nation's War Effort

When the final results of 1942 agricultural production were aggregated, it was discovered that peanut acreage had been increased by more than one million acres without at all encroaching on cotton production. This fact is but one small indication of how enormous the South's agricultural resources are. It is a tragedy that these resources have not yet been fully harnessed for war purposes.

Half of America's farms are in the South, although the area comprises only one-third of the nation's land area and contains only one-third of its population. Half of America's farm population is in the South. Half of the agricultural labor force is employed in the South. Two-thirds of the nation's fertilizer supply is absorbed in the South. But the South is contributing very much less than its fair share of the farm crops needed to keep the war effort rolling. Of the nation's total production, the South provides only:

- 19 per cent of the milk.
- 25 percent of the eggs.
- 27 percent of the chickens.
- 18 percent of the pork.
- 24 percent of the beef.
- 8 percent of the soybeans.

There are 168 million acres of cropland in the South, one-third of the Nation's total. Yet in 1940, the census showed that only 63 percent of this available land was actually used. The rest lay fallow or was permitted to stay in relatively unproductive pasture. War demands that we take up the slack wherever it exists; no land capable of bearing food can be wasted in the midst of a total war.

Moreover, 40 percent of the cropland in cultivation is devoted to the production of cotton and tobacco which are already on hand in such great quantities as to make

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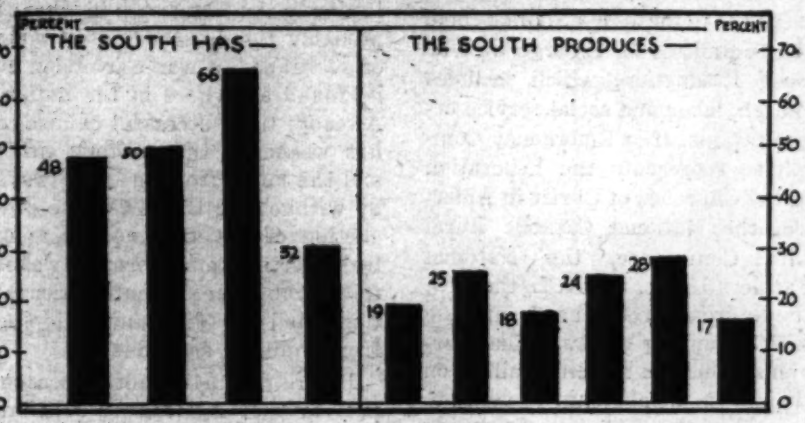
Resources and Production

Southern Share of the National Total



SOUTHERN PATRIOT *Chart.*
Soures: U. S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Food Production Expanding

(Continued from Page 1)

farms were drawn into new Southern war industries, industries in other parts of the Nation, and into the armed forces. Now, with these workers gone, Southern families have more breathing space on the land, production per worker is rising, and incomes of the remaining farmers are proportionately higher than before.

Accompanying the drain of workers from farms and the increased demand for workers in food production, wage rates for hired workers on Southern farms have increased steadily. At least a million hired workers—regular, seasonal, and casual—have obtained substantial wage increases.

The South's expansion in food crops is something everyone for years has agreed ought to come to pass. War has forced the adoption of the things that the State colleges of agriculture, the Extension Services, and the press have preached for more than two decades. Once the crisis came, the Government's programs of price supports, provision of marketing channels for new products and provision of industrial employment for workers not needed in agriculture wrought a stupendous change within less than 3 years.

These measures—both agricultural and industrial—are the foundation stones for the wartime incomes of Southern farmers and of the broad changes in type of agriculture now taking place. Whether policies will be changed again after the war—whether the price and marketing machinery shall be destroyed, and the powder plants and other Government-financed enterprises torn down—is something yet to be decided. If the farmers' price and marketing mechanisms are retained in full effect, and if war industries are converted to peacetime production of consumer goods on a permanent basis, the South will grow in prosperity for decades to come. On the other hand, if these measures are thrown into the discard, the South's chances for a balanced and enduring plenty will again be on the ash-heap.

Non-Essential Crops Absorb Bulk of Farm Effort As Cotton Bloc Resists Conversion to War Needs

FSA Supporters

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To the defense of FSA has come the Committee for Emergency War Food Production, which includes church, labor and social service organizations. The Emergency Committee represents the Federation of the Churches of Christ in America, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, the National Farmers Union, the AFL, the CIO, the Railroad Brotherhoods, and the YWCA, among others. These organizations are not only calling on their own membership to come to the aid of the FSA, but are urging all friends of the small farmers to do likewise.

Significantly allied with FSA is the Farmers Union, which stands for the welfare of the *whole* people. In its broad, social program it clings to two democratic tenets:

- Widespread land ownership is healthy;
- Urban workers are the friends and not the enemies of farmers.

More and more the Farmers Union has become the spokesman for the family farm where ownership and labor are functions of the same person. While the Farm Bureau and Grange fight selfishly the President's anti-inflation program, the Farmers Union has given it firm support. While the Farm Bureau and Grange live by scarcity "price" economics, the Farmers Union is dedicated to an economy of abundance. While the Farm Bureau and Grange leaders use their powerful Washington lobbies to consistently foster reactionary legislation, the Farmers Union has been continually in support of all progressive measures, and President Roosevelt is known to be quite friendly with the Farmers Union head, James G. Patton of Colorado.

The present drive in Congress for lifting all restrictions on the production and marketing of cotton is simply the latest step in what is probably the outstanding example of resistance to war conversion to be found anywhere in the nation. Already, this successful campaign has weakened the military effort and the home front in many ways by withholding land from the production of urgently needed food, by diverting an enormous labor force from more essential occupations and by diverting shipping from military assignments.

Before the 1942 planting season, Secretary of Agriculture Wickard called for a reduction in cotton production as part of his drive to convert agricultural resources to war requirements. Instead, the National Cotton Council succeeded in expanding production by misleading farmers about the wartime value of cotton. Now, in 1943—one year after Pearl Harbor—Secretary Wickard has tried once more to reduce cotton production, but with even less success than last year. Not until the large body of working farmers realizes the facts of the situation and then makes known its solid support of the President and of the Secretary of Agriculture, will it be possible to convert this enormous sector of our agricultural plant.

The situation is clear-cut not only in regard to cotton but in regard to its Southern companion, tobacco, as well. Storehouses are already bulging with a two-year supply of cotton on hand, yet the acreage in 1943 is being increased more than 10 per cent over last year. Tobacco supplies are just as ample, nevertheless this year's planting will be 20 percent greater than in 1942. An even more dramatic illustration of the complete lack of relationship between production and need is provided by the case of the shortest staple lengths of cotton. There has been no effective reduction of such production despite the existence of a five-year supply on hand, and despite the unlikelihood that its chief pre-war user, Japan, will be purchasing much of it in the near future.

Cotton interests have sought to justify the continued production and even the expansion of cotton by emphasizing its by-product yield of edible oils and of protein feeds, both of admitted importance among war crops. Unfortunately, this contention has been effectively scotched by the president of the Alabama Farm Bureau Federation, Walter Randolph, by President Wingate of the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation, and by Stephen Duggan, Director of the Southern Region of the AAA. Each of them

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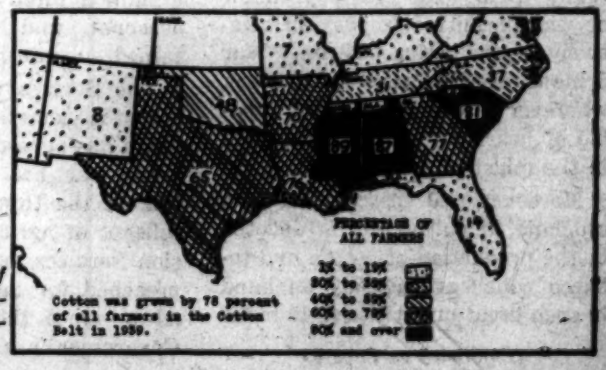
Farmers Growing Cotton


PERCENTAGE OF ALL FARMERS
1% to 19%
20% to 39%
40% to 59%
60% to 79%
80% and over
Cotton was grown by 78 percent of all farmers in the Cotton Belt in 1939.

SOUTHERN PATRIOT *Chart.*

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, based on 1939 Census Data.

The Southern PATRIOT

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The Pantry of Democracy

Food will win the war.

Because we know the truth of this simple statement, because we know that the fate of all humanity is dependent upon victory—and that victory can be achieved only if American farmers produce as they have never produced before—because we know these things, THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT presents in this issue *facts on food production.* Written by some of the top agriculturists in the country, the articles in this issue of THE PATRIOT make certain facts apparent:

• The way to increase food production without using either more labor or more machinery is by the heavier use of phosphate fertilizer. Blocked only by selfish fertilizer interests, this TVA-tested miracle fertilizer can increase our food production by a third.

• The need for increased food production is vital. Equally as important as the Arsenal of Democracy, America is now *The Pantry of Democracy.*

• Under the impact of war, the South's traditional two-crop system is—and must—give way to diversified food farming. We cannot eat cotton. We cannot eat tobacco. We must grow food.

• In 1942 FSA families increased production of nine critical war crops far more, proportionately, than other farmers in the country. FSA must not only be retained, but expanded.

• The South's agricultural resources are enormous. This makes even greater the responsibility for effective utilization. Today the South is contributing much less than its fair share of the farm crops needed to keep the war effort rolling. All-out production for war is as essential for Southern farmers as for Southern industries. We have not yet gotten this production. *We must have it.*

• Similar under-utilization and misapplication characterize the employment of the South's great labor force. Most of these workers are idle more than four months of the year and nearly two-thirds of their working time is devoted to the cotton and tobacco crops.

The task for Southern agriculture is then as vital as it is obvious: effective utilization of all resources to maximize farm production. This war will not be won by farming-as-usual. All-out food production is the need of the hour.

Needed Measures

From the point of view of the national economy, two measures are desperately needed for effective price control—food subsidies and grade labeling.

Rationing is quite obviously the democratic way of distribution. But rationing *alone* is not sufficient to win the war against inflation. Food prices have already risen far too high, and they must now be pushed back or increased wage demands will produce a deadly inflation spiral.

The experience of Great Britain indicates that direct government food subsidies is the only way to stabilize food prices in wartime. Meeting rising costs by rising prices is the sure road to inflation. It is time Congress acted to establish food subsidies.

To freeze prices without freezing quality is the height of absurdity. If producers are free to substitute inferior products, charging for them the same rate as they formerly charged for a higher quality product, and canning them under the same name, then the consumer is in effect paying inflationary prices. Only grade labeling can solve the problem, and consumer and liberal groups everywhere should fight for its adoption.

Eyes on the Senate

Once again all eyes will be fixed on the Senate.

By a vote of 265 to 110 the House of Representatives on May 25 passed the Marcantonio Anti-Poll Tax Bill, which bans the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting in federal elections.

Last year a similar bill was passed by the House but was filibustered to death in the Senate. Prospects are much better now, however, for the Senate has a year and a half in which to act before the bill dies.

In the meantime, however, all pressure must be exerted by the people to prevent a minority of Senators from sabotaging the democratic processes.

If you would like to join in this campaign sign below:

An Appeal to the Senate for a Free Ballot

Since a free ballot is the cornerstone of genuine democracy, we urge the passage of legislation abolishing the poll tax as a condition of voting in federal elections. Such action at this time would be a long step toward the free world for which we fight.

Name_____ **Address**_____

Organization and title (if any)_____

Mail to 506 Presbyterian Building, Nashville, Tenn.

Solution to Farm Labor Problem Advanced in Three-Point Program

Solution of the South's farm labor shortage problem can be found in a three-point program directed toward:

- Eliminating idle labor time lost in inter-seasonal slack periods.
- Increasing efficiency of available labor.
- Utilizing available supply for work only on crops most essential to war effort.

Employing one-half of the entire farm labor force of the nation, the South has been affected by the manpower shortage, as has all other segments of the economy, but actual field studies by the Government has demonstrated there are more workers on the farms this year than last, with young men who left having been adequately replaced by older men, women and children. Moreover, the studies show, the output per farm worker has actually risen 30 per cent above the pre-war level.

Enforced idleness of farm labor can only help the enemy by holding down food production. **Yet millions of workers on Southern farms are practically unemployed from four to six months of the year.** There is need, urgent need, for some kind of war mobilization mechanism which will find fruitful employment for all such labor during idle months and which will also guarantee its availability to Southern farmers when the labor needs arise.

Practically all of the cotton fields of the mid-South were picked clean by the first of November last year. But instead of taking their usual winter "vacation," several hundred farm workers from this area signed up with the Farm Security Administration and the United States Employment Service to go to New Mexico and Arizona to pick the long staple cotton there. In midwinter when they had finished in Arizona and New Mexico, many of them signed up to work in the winter vegetable crops of Florida. When spring came, most of them returned to their homes to put in a cotton crop as usual. By moving with the seasons these workers are, for the first time, fully employed the whole year-'round.

The experiences of the FSA, the USES, and the Southern Tenant Farmer's Union last winter show that this mobility can best be facilitated by:

- The guarantee of government transportation to and from the areas where additional workers are needed.
- The assurance that wages and working conditions will be reasonable.
- An organization to which the workers can belong and through which they can be certain they will have a voice in making the decisions that affect them.

When a high degree of mobility is desired, it is obviously unwise to "freeze" workers to the farm, for when this is done they are at the same time "frozen" to months of enforced idleness. Such measures provide no means for the more effective utilization of farm labor. Under them, patriotic sharing of labor becomes illegal.

The Southern Tenant Farmer's Union estimates that with guarantees of transportation and working conditions, it could recruit at least 10,000 farm workers in the mid-South who would sign up for the duration of the war to go anywhere in the United States when they are not busy with their own crops.

Nor is there any solution in the efforts of another group of farm spokesmen to permanently shame Southern farmers in the eyes of their countrymen by demanding the complete deferment of all men engaged in farming. Such blanket deferment has been withheld from shipyards, from steel plants, from airplane factories and from tank arsenals, despite their urgent need to keep their skilled manpower.

Even if the South has less labor than it once had in the days of peacetime surpluses, no other section of the country, no other sector of the war economy, is as adequately supplied with manpower as Southern agriculture. **Much of that manpower is working inefficiently,** for lack of such elementary analysis of work methods and training as was recently demonstrated to have increased cotton pickers' output 30 per cent by a few simple modifications in hand motions. **Much of that manpower is idle** during a large part of the year—irretrievably pouring hundreds of millions of man-hours down the drain. **Much of that manpower is being devoted to crops which are little more useful to the war effort than chromium-plated automobile bumpers.**

For Further Reading

There are a number of excellent publications containing accurate and authentic information on problems relating to food which are available. Perhaps the finest summary of the situation yet to come to our attention is the April 15 issue of *Social Action*, "A Magazine of Fact," published by the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches. Contained in the issue is a 43-page article by Elizabeth Herring, Secretary for Rural Work of the National Board of the YWCA, which is a complete and comprehensive discussion of the farm problem under the title of "Democratic Issues in Food Production." We heartily recommend it. Copies may be obtained for 15 cents apiece by writing to *Social Action*, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

Other reading:

The National Union Farmer is published by the Farmers Union, 3501 East 46th Avenue, Denver, Colo., 50c a year.

Spade is a bi-weekly Washington newsletter on agriculture with a liberal point of view. Editor, Joe Storm, 1376 National Press Building, Washington, D. C., $5.00 a year.

Facts for Farmers is a four-page monthly publication, sympathetic with the small farmer. Liberal and well recommended. 25c a year. Address: 39 Cortlandt St., New York City.

Food Shortage

(Continued from Page 1)

beans, peanuts, sugar cane and all vegetables produced for market. These latter are war crops; cotton is not.

President Wingate of the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation told a Congressional Committee, "I have three boys in the Air Forces. One of them is flying a Fortress today. I am very much interested in this war program, and especially in the food part of it. . . . **We cannot eat surplus cotton. We cannot eat tobacco. . . . We have got to grow food.** The farmer is willing to grow something else. He wants to help win this war."

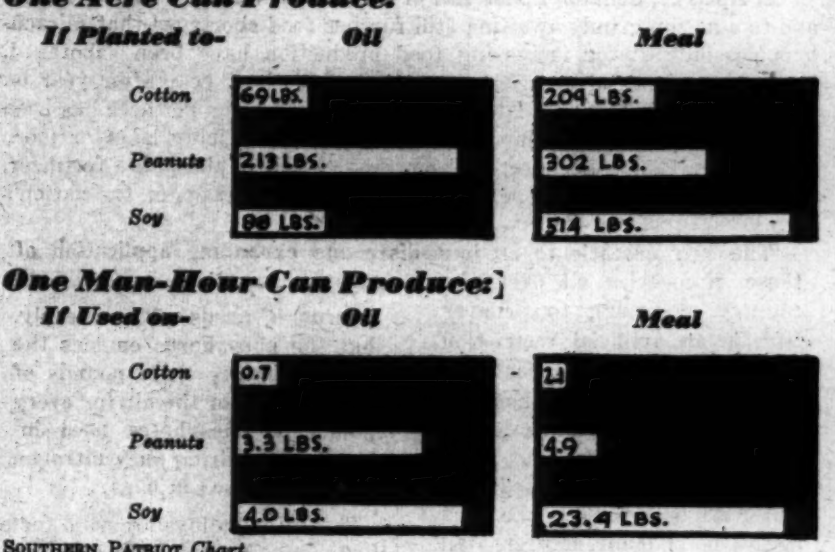
The overwhelming majority of Southern farmers certainly agree with these patriotic sentiments. But these sentiments are not shared by all, as Senator Kilgore of West Virginia points out: "Certain groups are, I hope thoughtlessly, working against the national interest in this respect. These groups are diverting land, manpower, machinery, fertilizer, chemicals and transportation facilities from essential war uses to the production of luxury crops or high-profit crops which can now be dispensed with."

Senator Kilgore goes on to warn, however, that, "The individual farmer cannot always convert alone. He is part of a system. A conversion program is necessary before he can discharge his duty."

If our war effort were dragging because of a shortage of planes, it would be easy to point to those responsible. If the shortage were in ship production or in tank production, identification of what groups weren't doing as much as possible would be equally clear. The fact is that food shortages represent one of the outstanding threats to the war effort and the solution to this problem, too, can come from only one place—the farmers of the country, and particularly, the farmers of the South.

Oil and Feed

Comparative Yield of Oil and Oilseed Meal From Cotton, Soybeans, and Peanuts in the Ten Cotton States



SOUTHERN PATRIOT *Chart.*
Source: Cotton and Fiber Branch, Food Distribution Administration, Feb. 28, 1943.

Cotton Bloc Resists Conversion

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has helped to tell the story of the comparative yields of cotton, peanuts and soybeans in the cotton states, which is summarized graphically. (*See above.*)

Tobacco producers lack even this by-product justification for continuing the production of this highly intensive crop.

Few people realize how great a price the entire nation pays in order to accommodate the distaste of these groups for converting to war production. Nearly one-third of all the farms in the country are raising cotton and tobacco. These crops make exorbitant demands on our short farm labor supply, cotton requiring 91 man-hours per acre for planting, cultivation and harvesting, while tobacco requires more than 600 man-hours per acre each season. **In short, about one-third of the manpower in agriculture or two and one-half times as much labor as is absorbed by wheat, truck crops, peanuts and soybeans combined is devoted to the production of these two surplus crops. Moreover, they account for 25 million acres of cropland and nearly one-fourth of the nation's fertilizer consumption. It is instructive to note that the United States has had to divert 900,000 tons of shipping capacity from war runs to Australia and Pacific bases in order to import little more Chilean nitrates than is represented by the nitrogen dressings on cotton and tobacco lands.**

Southern farmers with sons in the Army will be interested to know how they have been misled by those who have proved themselves more willing to oppose the war effort than to subordinate their personal commitments to cotton production, cotton processing and cotton marketing. **It may be that the Secretary of Agriculture will yet get enough support from the ranks of Southern farmers to begin the conversion of cotton lands before another planting season rolls around. Certainly, we have here a spectacle of waste and absenteeism without counterpart in industry.**